

THE RED CROSS CONFERENCE.

Report of Mrs. McGrath, a Delegate from Tillamook, of What Took Place at the Meeting.

The conference held Monday at 2 o'clock in Bagley Hall, on the University of Washington grounds. Mr. C. D. Stimson, Division Manager, opened the conference with a short statement of the purposes of the conference. He said in part that the object of the conference was to promote the better understanding between the Division Headquarters and the Chapters resulting in more co-operation in the work; to help the chapters and branches understand part of the difficulties that confront the Division Headquarters; and to clear up, if possible, some of the mistaken ideas that had been hindering the work. He hoped that we would all carry back to our respective organizations the idea that they were trying in every possible way to get the organization into perfect running order; if we would take into consideration the rapid growth of the membership, the growth from 400,000 to 2,200,000, and the great development of the work in like proportion we could perhaps understand more fully the problems that had to be confronted and solved. It was asked that the military spirit of obedience be exhibited between organizations and their superior organizations in regard to directions transmitted to them; that the same spirit of unity of action and purpose be the keynote.

Dr. Suzzalo, President of the University of Washington, made the opening address. He told of the great scope of the Red Cross work at home and abroad. The assistance it offered to the Belgians as their country was invaded and they were forced to flee; its maintenance of Hospital and Ambulance Units; what the Red Cross does towards the rebuilding and restoring of the devastated countries. Then of the aid and comfort it gives to the Repatriates; the wonderful work it did in caring for and feeding the Italian refugees during the Italian retreat; and finally of the great part "The Greatest Mother of the World" is to take in the future toward our own men at the front and in the care and comfort of the families these men have left behind.

He then spoke of the Sphagnum moss and the part it was hoped it would play in surgical dressings for the wounded. He said the truth of the old adage that "necessity is the mother of invention" is particularly noticeable in times of great emergency. The present war emergency has occasioned the original thinking and inventiveness shown in recent development along many lines. It is seen in marvelous skill and proficiency of surgery, not only in the new methods of the treatment of wounds, which have been astounding, but also in various materials used for dressings. War had been declared only a few months when it was seen that there was likely to be a shortage of absorbent cotton, and in an effort to avert such a calamity experiments were begun with a kind of moss known as Sphagnum, or peat moss, as a substitute. And now surgical and non-surgical dressings made from Sphagnum are being used in the war hospitals, not only in Great Britain, but in France, Malta, Alexandria, Salonica, Italy, and Palestine, practically on all the allied fronts.

Sphagnum moss is widely distributed throughout the world. It grows in abundance in low, marshy, undrained places, especially in and around cranberry bogs, but it may occur in other swampy locations. It thrives best in the damp, humid climate of the colder parts of the temperate zones in Europe, Asia and America. It is found abundantly on the moors of Scotland and Ireland, and also in the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea.

This moss is much better than sawdust or even cork as a medium for packing and shipping raw fruit, like grapes, because when one bunch gets bad the moss immediately absorbs the moisture and prevents the infection from spreading. And it has been used in Scotland and Ireland, for absorbing the discharge from boils and other suppurating wounds.

Like many other great discoveries and inventions the use of Sphagnum as a surgical dressing was discovered by accident. In the early eighties of the last century a workman at one of the outlying peat moors in north Germany accidentally sustained a severe lacerated wound of the forearm. In the absence of anything better, ready to hand, his wound was wrapped up with fragments of Sphagnum or "peat moss" which were lying near and after an interval of ten days he arrived at the surgical clinic at Kiel with the original dressing undisturbed. It was feared that the wound when exposed to view would be found in a most unsatisfactory state, but to the contrary, when the dressing was removed, it was found that the wound had healed. This was a dressing material obtained with a dressing material which seemed so unpromising led to a very careful inquiry into its nature and properties. The practical outcome of this inquiry was that the value of Sphagnum as a surgical dressing was found to be due to its marvelous power of absorbing fluids.

Sphagnum was first used in a large way during the Russo-Japanese war when the Japanese used it quite extensively as a first aid dressing. Many of the wounds thus dressed were not inspected again for a period of ten days, or until the patient reached Japan. The wounds were almost invariably in good condition, in better condition than when a cotton dressing had been used.

Shortly after the present war broke out in 1914 Dr. C. W. Cathcart, an Edinburgh surgeon and a lieutenant-colonel in the Medical Corp of the British Army, began experimenting with it in one of the Scottish War Hospitals. The first account of these experiments appeared in "The

Scotsman," in November, 1914. Dr. Cathcart then formed an organization for collecting and preparing the moss for surgical pads in Edinburgh. In September 1915 a second organization was formed in the south of Ireland. The work thus begun was so promising that many new organizations sprang up all over Scotland and Ireland. During this experimental stage there was considerable opposition to this kind of surgical pad, but as the method of making the dressings improved the opposition disappeared, in the making of these pads great care must be used that the leafy part and seeds do not get to the surface of the pad because these particles will cause great irritation if they get into the wound.

In February, 1916, the British War Office accepted the moss dressings as "Official" Dressings, placing all the volunteer Sphagnum Moss Organizations under a director General of voluntary organizations, with Sir Edward Dard as its head. Since then the output of Sphagnum dressings has gradually increased that the British are now making 1,000,000 pads a month.

The Red Cross in Canada took up the work under the direction of Dr. J. B. Porter, of McGill University; and although there were not many dressings made they were organized and ready to meet the call for Sphagnum dressings when the demand suddenly became more urgent. This demand came in January of this year in the form of an order from the British War Office for 20,000,000 Sphagnum surgical dressings.

When the United States entered the war interest was taken in this work by Americans. The American Red Cross undertook this work in January 1918, but the National Surgical Dressings Committee discontinued it.

In July, 1917, a request came from the Italian Relief to Dr. Suzzalo, President of the University of Washington, to ascertain if a suitable moss for surgical dressings grew in this region. Samples of Sphagnum moss were secured and sent to the French Relief Committee at Chicago and these samples were found suitable. But the supply of moss was too far from Chicago for the people there to handle, so the work was taken up by the Faculty Wives' Club of the University of Washington, and through this organization persons in the neighborhood of the University became interested.

On March 1, 1918, Sphagnum was officially recognized by the National Red Cross of America and authority given to the Northwest division to make 50,000 pads was given to the Seattle chapter and these are being made at the auxiliary work rooms on the Campus of the University of Washington.

The collection of the moss is one of the most important phases in the making of Sphagnum. Much depends upon the condition of the moss when it reaches the sorters if their work is to be most efficient. The Canadian Red Cross has emphasized this point in its printed instructions to collectors as follows: "It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of care in the collection of the raw moss. Practical experience has shown that carelessness on the part of the collector decreases the efficiency and output of the sorter to an enormous extent and not infrequently renders an otherwise useful supply of moss worthless for practical purposes. It should be the aim, therefore, of the collector to make a record for quality and not for quantity."

The moss should be collected in clean gunny sacks. If the sacks have been used for potatoes or similar materials they should be boiled at least one hour and dried before using.

Dr. Suzzalo then spoke of the reasons that have made it hard for Americans as a nation to work together. We as a people have strength as individuals but lack ability to work together. Germany is strong on organization but weak on individual strength. This is a war between the two systems. The outcome will decide whether we shall have the right to think and act as individuals or whether our acts and thoughts shall be decided for us as in the German organization.

The American Red Cross is the second line of defense in this war. Its work must be carried on in spirit of tolerant cooperation. We must remember as we take our part in this work that each one of us is individually responsible for some one soldier at the front. You—each one of us is the supporter of some one man at the front. What will happen to you—to me—to any one of us if her man falls in his duty in the trenches. What will become of our homes if they fail? And just as the combined individual effort of each of our men is holding that long thin line in Flanders and in France and keeping the Beast of Berlin from overrunning this fair land of ours and from pointing our homes as the homes of Belgium and France have been polluted, so the sum of our individual efforts is needed here to maintain them, support them in health and sickness, and make it possible for them to continue to hold that line. If we fail we too must fall—there is no help for it.

Each one of these men have made a tremendous sacrifice to protect us and ours from the violation of the beast. Many have made and all are ready to make the great sacrifice—"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." Can we fail them in their hour of need? Shall we not gladly deprive ourselves for him, not deeming it a sacrifice—not daring to call it a sacrifice, for they, not we, are making the sacrifice. Shall we not substitute for what we can do in our poor way "service" for the word "sacrifice"?

In contrast with them we do not know what the word sacrifice means. We are asked not to worry or chafe because of changes in the specifications for Red Cross goods. These changes cannot be avoided. As the work grows and conditions change experience demonstrates errors and changes are requested.

As soon as possible a change will be made in the matter of supplies. Mr. Hilton, of the Bureau of Supplies, went East early this year to arrange for machines for the cutting out of garments made by the Red Cross, and as soon as these machines are installed and a ninety days supply of materials is on the warehouse shelves all goods will be supplied when allotment is given. Hereafter there will be no local buying. Therefore all material on hand must be used up as rapidly as possible.

A telegram which was read by Mr. Hilton to the Bureau of Supplies explains the reason for this action. In substance it is this: The Red Cross of the American Red Cross Bureau of Purchases, who estimated that it saved \$18,000 on a single order. The Red Cross has had heretofore "a Government responsibility with a civilian standing in trade." The centralization of direction and control of chapter purchases at National Headquarters simplifies many problems and saves many thousands of dollars.

In the matter of receiving our allotment. It can be done in one of two ways. Either we can agree to have our allotment sent to us and the goods for the same can be automatically allotted; or we can request and if we agree to accept it the goods will be forwarded immediately upon receipt of our acceptance.

If I may be permitted to offer a suggestion it would be that we automatically accept our allotment if we wish to prove that we are coming nearer to the time when we will be qualified to become a Chapter. Before we can hope to become a Chapter the volume of our work must increase very materially.

The new quota of work includes 100,000 refugee garments, 30,000 hospital garments. These hospital garments include helpless case shirts both twill and outing and pajama suits, bed socks and bed jackets. The last named are made without pants as are also the reversible cape and sleeve jackets which we have been making with trousers.

The output of refugee garments is to be materially increased. No old clothes should be sent in this work unless they have been made over to fit the specifications of the allotment. A committee was sent abroad to investigate the needs of the people in the devastated countries and it is upon their report that the specifications for refugee garments is based.

In all lines send only the allotment called for.

Definite and specific allotments will be sent each month from division headquarters, and each branch will receive its own proportion of the allotment and will, in turn, send a proper proportion to its auxiliaries. War is most uncertain and therefore the demands of war cannot be determined in advance for long periods of time. Do not worry then if the specifications should be different every month. Until it is possible for the material to be distributed, no allotments will be made. Use up all materials on your shelves. If the allotments and material have not been supplied to your work rooms will be closed unless you own proportion of the material can be supplied from division headquarters. All garments hereafter will have the Red Cross and the American Red Cross label which is used like the manufacturers' trade mark.

In making refugee garments official Red Cross patterns must be explicitly followed in making the following garments: Women's chemise, drawers, petticoats, morning blouses, shirts, house gowns from sixteen years and up with appropriation of about 50 per cent medium 25 percent large and 25 per cent small; and in making men's undershirts, undershirts, blouse suits and shirts except that the double bosom with the pocket in the men's shirts should be omitted. And so in making the pinafores. In making the petticoats omit the belt shown in the pattern and finish with a plain draw string. Shoulder shawls must be made 1 1/2 yards square of warm dark material, with hemmed or crocheted edges, or they may be knitted or dark color wool to the same size.

All layettes must be complete. The work must be done as well as it is possible to do it. Nothing should be sent that does not meet with the specifications. We must avoid trying to impose our own ideas upon these people and follow theirs as far as it is possible. We should increase our output of these refugee garments at once. We must not feel as though this was a matter of charity, it is only a matter of aid to our patrons. They have stood between our foe and us and have protected us and are protecting us today. Let these garments be as a gift from one proud nation to another. The Repatriates should be made to feel that each garment is a gift from a friend. All refugee garments must, provisionally, be made in six months' wear, the allotments of layettes, for this division is 2000.

We must not make patchwork quilts unless they are in our allotment. We must not send anything that is not in our allotment. We must obey orders and if we send things not called for we take up warehouse space that is precious and is needed for other things.

In shipping, boxes made either of old or new material should be 2x2x3, each garment should be folded over a standard size cardboard. This card is not left in the garment but is used so

that all garments when folded will be of uniform size.

Chipboard of the heaviest weight should be used, and of the following sizes:

Pajamas, operating gowns, bed jackets, hospital bedshirts, helpless case shirts—12x10 3/4 inches.

Underdrawers, undershirts—0 1/2 by 10 inches.

Convenient robes—12 1/2 x 14 1/2 in.

Bandage foot socks, Hot water bag covers, operating leggings, bed socks—12x7 inches.

The boxes in which the finished articles are shipped hold approximately:

Pajama suits 85 to 95 in a box according to weight of material.

Twill hospital bed shirts, 300.

Outing flannel bed shirts, 250.

Heavy outing flannel bed shirts 175.

Heavy twill tane shirts, 195.

Bed jacket, 145.

From these figures can be drawn some idea of what work must be accomplished if Tillamook wishes to become a chapter. The Division Headquarters looks unfavorably upon the organization of small chapters because thereby the division of allotments into such small quantities is required that goods sent in by them have to be repacked in Seattle because such a chapter cannot fill a box with the required or standard number of articles.

As to becoming a Chapter the opinion of those in authority in Seattle seemed to be that because of the Sphagnum situation Tillamook should continue in the same relation to Portland as we have held, unless by extreme growth and development she can prove herself worthy to become a chapter.

As for the knitting—it is definitely stated that from now on no toes except the Kitchner toe will be accepted. The Kitchner heel must also be made and no double heels should be made. In measuring a sock always use a yard stick. In using the heavy yarn for socks, cast on only 52 or 56 stitches instead of 60 as in the lighter weight yarn.

In making sweaters be sure that they are long enough. Do not send any sweaters shorter than 25 inches when finished. They should be allowed to hang over night before measuring.

Do not use any yarn in the home, keep it all for our boys who are going "over there."

Regarding Red Cross work the public is entitled to a full report of all that is being done. The utmost publicity should be given the use of Red Cross money and the work the Red Cross is doing in the community. The aims and ideas of the home service section should be kept constantly before the public, but it would be very unwise to give publicity to local family problems which come to the notice of the home service section; and unless carefully explained, statements dealing with financial relief are misleading, therefore, it is better at all times to refrain from making public any information on these two subjects. It is strongly urged that the person in charge of the home service work in a training school for social workers or as a substitute for a course in the Red Cross home service institute or by a stated course of reading and instruction.

Home service applies to the families of men in all branches of the service—to those in the regular army or in the national army, to sailors, marines, men of aviation corps, engineers, and to the families of men and women attached to hospital units as nurses, orderlies, or ambulance drivers. It applies to the families living in this country of soldiers or sailors of any of the allied forces, and also to the families of civilians who have been wounded or killed as the direct result of war activities for example through the torpedoing of a merchantman by a submarine.

The home service responsibilities are very great and in realizing this responsibility, it is necessary also to realize the proper limitations of the work. In this work the Red Cross has no desire to shirk or intrude. Many families will not need home service and our volunteer workers will go to none without a definite introduction.

First, help will be offered without fail, at the request of the men in the service.

Second, the need for help may come to the notice of the home service through the first aid organization.

Home service sections will often learn of emergencies in families and find ways of offering help when furnishing information about service pay and allotments, federal allowances to families, federal insurance and about the means of communication with men in hospitals or in captivity and so on.

Sometimes the information may come through the school teachers in the community, sometimes through the various religious and social organizations.

Dealing with the fortunes and feelings of these families is a delicate task, and one that must not be shirked or casually undertaken. Do not assume the mistaken attitude that the family needing help is receiving charity. That is the surest way to do away with the usefulness of this section of the work. Remember that on the condition of these families at home will rest the morale of the men at the front. It is not charity to help those who have given their means of support to aid in our protection in this war, it is a duty that we should be eager and anxious to perform. At the present time there are 40,000 families of enlisted men. This number will be doubled in a few months—this marks the measure of responsibility of home families in civilian relief. Repeatedly it should be stated that no homes should be entered in the name of home service without a definite invitation from the family or from responsible persons competent to speak for them. Therefore unconfirmed anonymous requests to visit families are to be ignored although a record of such requests should be kept. Be very careful when helping a family not to call money a loan when you are sure that the family can have no means of repaying the loan, do not put the burden of thinking they must repay on their shoulders. Make it as a gift,

home service has claim on all Red Cross funds.

It was asked that the home service section see that each drafted man leaves his insurance papers before he leaves his home town for camp. He is to carry his insurance papers to his camp officer. Make everything a matter of record that all complications may be avoided after the war.

In case of total disability the policy of the soldier matures as if death had taken place. In case of death the policy is not paid in one payment but at the rate of \$57.50 a month on a \$10,000 policy. Up to five years after the war the policy can be changed to any other form of insurance selected from among those that may be prescribed by the bureau without re-examination, so if his death has become impaired he is still protected.

It has come to the time when no small community should be without its classes in first aid. The call for doctors and competent nurses is so great that in the small communities especially there is apt to be no adequate way of caring for those left at home. It must be remembered that the course in first aid will not fit one to take the place of the physician or nurse in cases of severe illness or injury, but will be an aid in preventing epidemics or alleviating suffering and preventing possible death until the arrival of a competent physician. It has been asked that these classes be organized at once if they have not been organized already. The chairman of the first aid must be a physician who is a graduate of a recognized school and in active practice.

In Junior work, as it is the end of the school year, the manner in which the summer was discussed, it was decided that each chapter was better able to determine the wisest course in this matter.

The junior chairman must be a member of the executive committee, and all junior work is to be inspected by the branch and shipped with the branch work marked "Junior."

Among the suggested activities for juniors was the making of "Fun Books." They should be made out of stiff paper or cardboard about magazine size, six or eight pages to the book. Paste on these pages the funniest jokes and pictures that can be found as they are for use in the hospitals and anything unhappy would be of no benefit in helping the convalescent keep cheerful.

Other activities were the making of gun wipers, hospital shoes, dominoes, checker boards, and puzzles.

The boys living in Western Oregon and Washington can get the leaves of the Fox Glove for use in the medical department of the Army and Navy. Any one interested in this part of the work can get complete directions by writing to Dean Adolph C. Ziebie, of Corvallis, Oregon.

The junior can organize a salvage and junk department. In this department they are not permitted to purchase anything for resale. Each community must take care of its own salvage, there will be no place where it can be handled by either chapter or headquarters. The best way to handle salvage is to sell to the local junk men or to collect in carload lots. This is a list of salvage materials:

Wool clippings or woolen scraps from tailor shops.

Gunny sacks—There is a great demand for these, the poorest even being used for charcoal.

Iron in pieces of good size. Tin foil brings quite a price, lead foil is much cheaper, of mixed it sells as lead foil.

Brass of all sorts, aluminum, copper and lead scraps.

As to war garden products it is impossible for the Red Cross to accept home canned products for various and obvious reasons. Later when the convalescent homes for the foreign wounded have been established some arrangement may be made to evaporate junior war garden products either for use by the Red Cross here or for shipment abroad. It will be wise however to foster the interest in community war gardens. This work of course comes under the direction of the teachers.

There are some splendid little playlets of pedagogic value that can be obtained through the Anti-Tuberculosis League that can be used to keep the children interested in the work and help in the education of the community in the combating of tuberculosis.

Mr. Foisie and Mr. Arne both spoke on the rehabilitation and re-education of the crippled soldiers. In talking on this subject it was stated that we need not think that it was necessary at this time to face this problem. In view of the fact that already there had been returned to this country two shiploads of totally disabled men. It could be seen that this problem was already upon us. The object of this branch of the work is to take the right attitude toward these men. We were warned that at the first we would fall into the habit of neglecting these men. We would offer nothing of real help, just insane pity, until the man had lost respect for himself and all desire to help himself. The duty of the public toward these men will be to find positions that they can fill competently, or to see that they receive the training necessary to fit them into some line of work that they are capable of doing well. This process of training adults for a new trade has been termed "re-education" by the French, and the word is so expressive that the British and Italians have adopted it, and soon it will become familiar on this side of the Atlantic.

When a man is rehabilitated until he is not handicapped he is not a cripple. When a soldier suffers an amputation he emerges from the operation in a state of complete discouragement regarding his future. But when he finds that he has still something ahead of him, that he can go back to a regular job the transformation is amazing. In the future, cripples will be considered in a different light than in the past. Through their handicap may require careful selection of the occupation in which they are to engage, and, perhaps some special training preparatory to it. The vast number of men engaged in this war make for a large number of cripples. There are in Great Brit-

ain today over 35,000 amputation cases, and some conservative computations show of a force of one million men in the field for one year 30,000 may be expected to be permanently disabled. From this statement may be gathered some idea of the importance of this work of rehabilitation and re-education.

The first school for the training of crippled soldiers was founded by the Mayor of Lyons, M. Edouard Herriot, and is known as the "Ecole Joffre." Its example and success has stimulated the foundation of many other similar schools throughout France. In England the soldiers and sailors help society instituted the "Lord Roberts Fund" for the establishment of workshops in which disabled men could be trained and employed. In Italy the re-education of disabled soldiers is principally agricultural, due to the large proportion of peasants in the national army. This work of re-education is begun in the hospital, carried on into the convalescent hospital and completed in the training schools.

The United States is now making provisions for the men of its own forces who may be crippled in action. Already the Surgeon-General is prepared to provide for wounded men, not only medical and surgical care, but also the curative advantages of the simpler forms of occupation. In New York there has been established the Red Cross Institute for crippled and disabled men, made possible through the gift of Jeremiah Milbank of \$50,000 and the building in which the Institute is housed. This is the first specialized trade school in the United States for handicapped men. The capacity of the institute is 300. It also fits teachers to go out and help in other institutions of this kind, which are beginning to spring up over the country. The Red Cross Institute is beginning to conduct an educational propaganda along these lines. It has Red Cross institute classes in the making of artificial limbs, oxy-acetylene welding, printing, and mechanical drafting are under way, and an employment bureau has been in operation for several months. As far as it is possible this new training should be along familiar lines, but if there is no similar trade the handicapped men should be taught other trades. On April eighth a bill was introduced in Congress to provide for the vocational education of cripples. The attitude of the public in this matter can do much to help or hinder this work of rehabilitation. The disabled men returning from the front deserves the whole hearted gratitude and respect of the nation, but to make him a useless member of the community is an ill-advised way of meeting the obligation. It is not desirable to place men in positions as a charity, positions that they are not fitted for and cannot fill satisfactorily but to fit them into places that they are competent of filling and that they can hold for a life time. The nation can not go too far in showing gratitude to the war cripple provided the manner of its expression is sound.

The Red Cross Institute is prepared to give any amount of aid and has lantern slides etc. to be used in the education of the public. These lantern slides are available at the present time.

At the conference in Seattle the delegates were shown four reels of Red Cross films depicting the work and spirit of the Red Cross board. Films are to be had by wiring to the Bureau of Motion Pictures Northwest division of American Red Cross, Seattle, Washington. These films will cost \$5.00 each per day, and can be used either as a means of raising Red Cross money or as an educational feature. There are also some slides and lectures that are not so expensive as the films, the lecture is sent with the slides and is to be read as the pictures are thrown on the screen. The slides had not reached Seattle so the delegates did not have an opportunity to see them. The Bureau of Motion Pictures asked that if the places represented were interested in having the films that they should write and make such desire known. Aiter such letters were received from a number of such places interested the pictures would be routed and sent over the territory.

In speaking of the scope of the Red Cross and of the growth of the work since the beginning of the war Mr. Kilpatrick said that the reason the machinery of the Red Cross broke down in the beginning was because at that time it was a highly centralized organization. All matters concerning the Red Cross were discussed by forty men and every detail of Red Cross work was submitted and decided upon by them. He said it was unnecessary to try to describe the confusion and delay caused by this condition. As a result of his experience the policy of the Red Cross has been changed to one of decentralization, the parceling out of authority and responsibility.

As the volume of the Red Cross work increases as the importance and interest in the work increases, decentralization must be the keynote of success. His advice is "decentralize the organization and then expand the work." Therefore decentralize the work and get the organization ready to work in perfect harmony when the time comes, for if the time is not here it is close upon us.

In the matter of reports, especially financial reports there should be a full and complete statement each month which should be given the fullest publicity possible. The monthly meetings should have full and complete reports from each division of the work.

The Red Cross is supported by public subscription and contributions and the public is entitled to a full knowledge of the work as it is being carried on. It is a democratic and not an autocratic institution, and those who by virtue of their subscriptions are members of the local chapters, branches, and auxiliaries have the right to know how all the work is going on. And if by reason of incompetency or otherwise their money is being misspent or wasted or if some divisions of the work are overlooked or neglected to correct such misman-